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Supervisors Approve Funding for New Recovery Center at MLK Medical Campus

Hoping to reduce emergency room overcrowding and decrease the costs of keeping stabilized homeless patients in expensive hospital beds, the Board of Supervisors approved \$3.7-million in funding for a new recovery center on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Campus in Willowbrook.

The MLK Recovery Center, which is expected to open early next year, will accept patients who are clinically stable and ready for discharge, but who remain hospitalized because they are homeless. The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services loses millions of dollars each year because Medicaid (and other insurers) do not cover the cost of lengthy hospital bed stays for indigent patients. In addition, there is a shortage of places in Los Angeles County where these patients can stay while they recuperate.

The MLK Recovery Center will be housed in the former dormitory for Charles Drew University medical students on the MLK Campus. It will serve as an immediate discharge option for the County's entire hospital network, which includes four County-run hospitals and the privately-run MLK Community hospital.

The recovery center will be open 24-hours, 7-days per week, with staff providing meals, security, transportation, health services and other social services, such as housing support. It will serve approximately 900 to 1,400 patients per year countywide.

"I applaud the Department of Health Services for its innovation and leadership," said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who authored the motion to fund the recovery center. "This project will save lives, heal bodies and save dollars. I want to be certain that every patient sent to recovery is connected to the services she or he needs to be stabilized so they can hopefully find a home."

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